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(A DISCUSSION PAPER)

THE ARTS IN

In response to concerns about the state of the arts in Ontario schools expressed in recent published reports, research papers, and provincial reviews, the Ministry of Education has prepared this discussion paper to emphasize the importance of the arts in a balanced curriculum. It is hoped that this paper will be a vehicle for stimulating discussion among those individuals and groups concerned about providing for the educational needs of children including school staffs, trustees, parents, teacher education institutions, subject associations, teachers' federations, artists, government agencies, and community cultural organizations. In particular, the ministry's expectations are that the discussions generated by this paper will be a means of improving the design and implementation of educational programs which are based on the full range of positive human experience.

A Plan for Action

It is the intention of the Ministry of Education to disseminate this paper throughout the province prior to the convening of a series of regional conferences. At that time, general

ONTARIO SCHOOLS



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Education

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reactions to the content of the paper could be shared, considered, and debated, and recommendations formulated. Following these regional conferences, school boards could form action-oriented groups to develop regional plans. It is anticipated that participants at the regional conferences would be representatives of school boards, trustees' associations, faculties of education, teachers' professional organizations, arts subject associations, community arts groups, the Ministry of Citizenship and Culture, and the Ontario Arts Council. Responses from individuals or groups should be directed to the regional offices.

It is hoped that the discussion generated by this paper will lead to renewed commitment on the part of educators at all levels to the provision for each and every student of a curriculum which includes comprehensive programs in each of the arts in order to maintain an appropriate balance between cognitive and affective learning. The search for creative ways of achieving this goal will also require a balance between analytical, logical thinking and the kinds of holistic, relational modes of thinking which are associated with the arts themselves. The children and young people in our schools deserve no less.

The Arts in Ontario Schools

The goals of education specified by the Ministry of Education and set forth in *Issues and Directions*¹ reflect not only the integrated nature of learning but the complex pattern of human development. The commentary accompanying the goals of education provided in that document focuses on the implications of significant changes in the social and economic conditions of the province and emphasizes the challenges facing educators to maintain a balanced curriculum that contributes to the development of all dimensions of the learner. Fundamental to the achievement of a balanced curriculum are quality programs in the arts which can be an important factor in helping young people meet the challenge of life in a rapidly changing society.

The arts are of primary importance in the learning process. They are a vital source of those human values which our young people will need in meeting the challenge of change and are intrinsic to the internalization of feelings of self-worth. They provide opportunities for artistic expression and experience through which the individual can acquire a sense of perspective with regard to the cultural evolutionary process and, hence, a greater awareness of self.

A highly significant part of our identity is related directly to our cultural heritage and the expressive forms which reflect that heritage. All forms of cultural heritage have national, regional, ethnic, community-based, familial, and individual perspectives. The arts of various periods and locations tend to reflect these perspectives and, combined with history, technology, and other disciplines and indicators, tell us who we

are and symbolize what we believe. Both study of and activity in the arts contribute significantly to awareness of and sensitivity to these aspects of self.

A Comprehensive Program in the Arts

Educators at all levels must be committed to the inclusion of programs in the arts in specific subject disciplines worthy of study in themselves, i.e., music, visual arts, dramatic arts, movement and dance, and in other areas of the curriculum where they can contribute to a better understanding of the human experience and condition.

All young people need the cultural identification that comes through involvement in the arts and, in particular, the attitudes and understanding that come from contact with the artistic expressions of the world's cultures. The opportunities that the arts provide for group activity in creative expression contribute in a special way to the development of positive relationships among students with diverse cultural backgrounds. It is important for the well-being of our multicultural society that the arts are recognized as essential to the achievement of the ideals of individual fulfilment and social harmony.

In addition to the social benefits provided by the arts, there are many economic benefits that have recently come to be recognized. There has been growth in the numbers of challenging career opportunities not only for creative and performing artists but also for professional, administrative, and technical staff in the arts and in arts-related industries.

A Context for the Arts in Ontario Schools

Goals

The Ministry of Education has defined one of the thirteen goals of education as follows:

Satisfaction from participating and from sharing the participation of others in various forms of artistic expression. Artistic expression involves the clarification and restructuring of personal perception and experience. It is found in the visual arts, music, drama, and literature as well as in those areas of the curriculum where both the expressive and receptive capabilities of the learner are being developed.²

Policy

Primary/Junior Divisions

The philosophical basis and rationale for arts programs that are an integral part of the child's learning experiences in the Primary and Junior Divisions are set out in the ministry's policy documents *The Formative Years*³ and *Education in the Primary and Junior Divisions*.⁴

1. Ministry of Education/Ministry of Colleges and Universities, Ontario, *Issues and Directions: The Response to the Final Report of the Commission on Declining School Enrolments in Ontario* (Toronto: Ministry of Education/Ministry of Colleges and Universities, Ontario, 1980).

2. *Issues and Directions*, p. 5.

3. Ministry of Education, Ontario, *The Formative Years* (Toronto: Ministry of Education, Ontario, 1975).

4. Ministry of Education, Ontario, *Education in the Primary and Junior Divisions* (Toronto: Ministry of Education, Ontario, 1975).

Intermediate/Senior Divisions

Ministry policy regarding the teaching of the arts in the Intermediate and Senior Divisions is set out in *Ontario Schools: Intermediate and Senior Divisions*⁵ and in curriculum guidelines for individual disciplines.

Responsibility

Primary/Junior Divisions

In the Primary and Junior Divisions, responsibility for the teaching of arts programs based on the ministry's curriculum policy rests primarily with the classroom or generalist teacher. Some boards have provided additional support for the classroom teacher through a network of consultants, itinerant teachers, resource teachers, or staff members with additional qualifications or expertise in a particular area who are assigned to assist with the music, art, or drama programs in other classrooms within the school. Other boards have attempted to staff schools in ways that ensure an equitable distribution of teachers with additional qualifications in the arts in order to offset the effects of staff reductions occasioned by declining enrolments.

Intermediate/Senior Divisions

In Grades 7 and 8 of the Intermediate Division, the teaching of the arts is the responsibility of either a subject specialist or the homeroom teacher. Responsibility for the teaching of the arts in the secondary schools is primarily that of subject specialists. There are instances, however, where teachers with multiple subject assignments are expected to teach a few classes in the arts without having specific qualifications or training in that area. This is permitted under Ontario Regulation 262, Section 20, which allows a school principal to assign up to two classes in visual arts, music, and certain other subjects to a teacher who does not hold additional qualifications in the particular subject area.

A Summary of General Concerns About the Arts in the Curriculum

Early Childhood

Young children need extensive opportunities to explore and make sense of experience. The arts provide much needed time and space for children to interact with people, symbols, and things in their environment.

Teacher Confidence and Expertise

The successful implementation of quality programs in the arts is dependent upon increased teacher confidence and expertise, particularly at the elementary level.

Community Support

The importance of the arts in the development of the human potential of all students must be recognized and supported by the community at large to ensure the continuation of programs in the arts during times of fiscal restraint.

Redeployment of Staff

Redeployment of teachers brought on by declining enrolments and accompanying staff reductions have contributed further to the decline in programs in the arts in some areas. In many cases senior staff members with limited arts backgrounds have been reassigned to teach these courses without opportunities for retraining.

Loss of Arts Specialists

Several factors have contributed to a reduction in the number of arts specialists in schools. Economic constraints have prevented boards from hiring recent graduates with special certification in the arts. These constraints have forced some smaller boards to eliminate positions for arts specialists in middle and intermediate schools and resource personnel (consultants and resource teachers) in K-to-8 schools. Some boards have restructured the elementary school on a K-to-8 model, a situation which often results in the loss of arts specialists. In such instances homeroom teachers, some of whom may not feel sufficiently confident to do so, must assume full responsibility for programs in visual arts, dramatic arts, and music.

Teacher Training

Causes for concern are the decline in the number of program offerings in the arts for teachers, the reduction in the number of teachers seeking additional qualifications in the arts, and the fact that pre-service training for teachers does not always include compulsory arts components.

Staff reductions and fiscal constraints in teacher education institutions have made it increasingly difficult for them to offer a complete range of programs leading to additional qualifications in the arts. Fewer teachers apply for the available courses, choosing instead those courses that appear to hold greater promise of employment.

Program Content

Program offerings in the arts can fail to meet the needs and capabilities of individual students; the result is that many students are being denied the benefits which accrue from involvement in forms of artistic expression. This situation can occur when the arts are perceived as having largely to do with product and performance. Learning outcomes depend as much on the processes used, in particular those that free the imagination and permit exploration and discovery on a personal level.

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5. Ministry of Education, Ontario, *Ontario Schools: Intermediate and Senior Divisions* (Toronto: Ministry of Education, Ontario, 1984).

Resources and Facilities

There continues to exist a wide disparity in material, fiscal, and human resources that are applied to programs in the arts both across the province and within each jurisdiction. In some areas school reorganization has created additional problems: facilities are inadequate, staff are not well prepared in the subjects, and curriculum planning for the arts is not co-ordinated.

Special Education

There is concern that all exceptional students do not have access to quality programs in the arts. Courses leading to additional qualifications in special education provide limited training for teachers in acquiring the knowledge and expertise required for implementing the goals of education in the arts. For students with behavioural and physical exceptionalities and exceptionalities that affect ability to communicate, the arts take on special importance in helping them meet their needs for developing a positive sense of self.

Experiences with the arts can also extend and refine motor, perceptual, and communication skills. The arts provide gifted children in particular with alternative ways of examining and expanding knowledge. Children who are artistically gifted are not always identified and provided for.

Time Allotments

Intermediate Division

There has been a wide disparity in time allotments at the Intermediate level whether in K-to-8 schools, middle schools, or other Intermediate schools. For many students, exposure to the arts in the Intermediate Division is their first formal opportunity to develop skills and acquire concepts in the arts disciplines. If students are provided with direct learning experiences at this stage in their development, they will acquire the necessary foundation in the arts, and this foundation will allow them to continue with or return to programs in the arts with some degree of confidence. It is important, therefore, that all students in the Intermediate Division have equality of access to programs in the arts. *Ontario Schools: Intermediate and Senior Divisions* gives guidance in providing for breadth and balance in the arts in the school program.

Access to Arts Programs

Secondary Schools

Present concerns regarding the broad interpretation of arts subjects for credit purposes at the secondary-school level were addressed in the *Renewal of Secondary Education*.⁶ The new circular *Ontario Schools: Intermediate and Senior Divisions* defines the arts as music, visual arts, and dramatic arts and stipulates that students will be required to include one arts credit in the sixteen compulsory credits for the Ontario Secondary School Diploma.

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6. Ministry of Education, Ontario, *Renewal of Secondary Education* (Toronto: Ministry of Education, Ontario, 1982).

Conclusions/
Focus for Discussion

The following are concerns relating to the arts in general.

Policy Development

Conclusions	Focus for Discussion
There is a need for a renewed commitment on the part of the Ministry of Education, teacher education institutions, school boards, school staffs, and teachers' organizations to quality instruction in the arts for all students in elementary and secondary schools.	How could each of these groups play a role in the development of a provincial network of human and other resources directed towards the promotion of quality instruction in the arts in the schools of Ontario?
All students must have access to an education in the arts in both the elementary and secondary schools. This access should not be limited to those who show particular talents or aptitudes.	What aspects of policy formulated by each of these parties would directly affect access to quality programs in the arts for all students?
Although there is a belief that the arts are as basic to general education as they are to human experience, they are none the less given low priority among curricular areas of concern by many boards in Ontario.	How can the concept that the arts are basic to general education be promoted both within school boards and within their surrounding communities?
Insufficient attention has been given to the identification of artistically gifted students and the provision of specialised or concentrated instruction for them.	To what extent can the needs of these students be identified and accommodated within the present school structure?
The arts have particular significance for children with exceptionalities. Teachers of exceptional children require specialized knowledge and expertise in the arts.	What are the special contributions the arts make to exceptional children? How can teachers of exceptional children gain instructional expertise in the arts? What alternatives exist for providing for the gifted?
Students who show exceptional artistic talent must be identified and provided for either within the school or in other settings.	How can school boards meet the needs of the artistically talented in their jurisdictions?
There is a tendency to consider an "arts across the curriculum approach" as a suitable substitute for the study of music, visual arts, and dramatic arts as distinct disciplines.	How can principals, in co-operation with staff, ensure that interdisciplinary activities involving the arts are supplements to and not substitutes for developmental programs in each of the arts?

Policy Implementation

Policy implementation is a key problem in the arts since it involves changing attitudes and beliefs as well as instructional strategies. School boards have the prime responsibility for implementation, supported by the regional offices of the ministry.

Conclusions	Focus for Discussion
The implementation of a comprehensive program in the arts requires a common understanding of and commitment to the goals of arts education throughout the system. The need for a network of regional co-operation is essential to the effective delivery of programs in the arts.	Who should comprise this network and what should be the responsibility of each member group? Who should initiate these activities?
There is a need for greater co-ordination among supervisory personnel, principals, and teachers in the <i>delivery</i> of arts programs throughout the system in terms of staff responsibilities and interaction.	How can greater co-ordination be achieved at the board level and at the school level?
While teachers are not expected to be technical experts and performers in the arts, they must have a certain general understanding of the arts, some experience in perceiving and responding to the expressive import of the arts, and the receptiveness and sensitivity needed to ensure their own continuing growth in this area.	What kinds of experiences in their professional development do teachers require in order to acquire skills in and sensitivity to the expressiveness and power of music, art, drama, dance, and poetry as art forms?
Professional-development opportunities for teachers to acquire the specific expertise, understanding, and confidence to implement quality programs in each of the arts are limited.	How can school boards, teacher education institutions, superintendents, principals, and teachers' federations work together to address this issue?
Most classroom teachers at the elementary-school level can successfully provide a variety of valuable learning experiences if given opportunities for training both within and beyond the school setting. Teachers at the secondary-school level also require the stimulation and knowledge to be gained from continuous involvement in professional development.	How can school boards, teacher education institutions, and teachers' federations address the issues related to staffing criteria and training?
The arts have special needs with respect to time and space. At the intermediate level especially these needs require increased attention.	How can the special needs of the arts be accommodated within existing frameworks?
Many programs in the arts, particularly at the Grade 7 and Grade 8 levels, are restricted by rigid timetables and inflexible space arrangements. In Grades 9 and 10 the scheduling of music and drama classes are especially affected. In some jurisdictions there exists an inequitable distribution of time allotted to the delivery of programs in music, visual arts, and dramatic arts.	Who has the responsibility to ensure that the arts programs are integral to curriculum planning?

Conclusions	Focus for Discussion
Costs for consumable materials have increased dramatically; budgets have not.	How can funds best be allocated to ensure that adequate materials and resources are made available? Who should share the responsibility?
Some boards lack the resources to develop exemplary arts courses.	What forms of regional co-operation might be established to solve this problem?
Some school programs already benefit from the participation of local artists who work co-operatively with teachers in creating quality instruction. These include playwrights, composers, and creative artists.	How can the various educational bodies form links with local community resources (i.e., artists, musicians, museums, etc.) for the enrichment of teachers, the revitalization of programs, and the enlightenment of students to the role of the practising artist in the society at large?
Teachers need and request professional development in the arts. Arts subject associations offer excellent opportunities for such professional growth.	In what way can school administrators foster professional-growth opportunities for their consultants and teachers of visual arts, music, and dramatic arts?
Principals, guidance counsellors, and teachers need to be alerted to the many career opportunities in the arts and in arts-related fields and to encourage students to give the arts careful consideration when selecting their programs.	How can school staffs be alerted to and promote greater awareness of career opportunities in fields related to each of visual arts, music, and dramatic arts?

Policy Evaluation

Conclusions	Focus for Discussion
It is essential that the Ministry of Education and the school boards continue to work co-operatively towards the improvement of implementation of quality programs in the arts for all students in the system.	By what means can such co-operative activity be strengthened?
Patterns of assessment in each of music, visual arts, and dramatic arts must take into account the goals and objectives of the discipline as well as the nature of aesthetic experience and development.	What are the appropriate evaluative criteria for programs in each of music, visual arts, and dramatic arts? How can responsive and descriptive methods of evaluation be employed?

Additional Concerns

The following are *additional* concerns relating specifically to dramatic arts, music, visual arts, and "arts across the curriculum" which are not identified in the preceding sections.

Dramatic Arts

Conclusions	Focus for Discussion
In recent years, drama in education has been completely redefined. Emphasis now is on learning through drama rather than on the teaching of drama. This new emphasis is not widely understood.	How can the message about the role of drama in education be communicated to all sectors of the educational community and the public at large?
The new drama theory is being discovered by some teachers, but they are unsure of how to apply it. Consequently, human and material resources are urgently needed.	Who will assume the responsibility for making these resources available?
Opportunities for teacher education, at both pre-service and in-service levels, with respect to drama in education are severely limited and often non-existent. This situation demands immediate attention.	What action can be taken and by whom?
The need to gain recognition for drama in their schools has caused some teachers to become too oriented to "show-casing". This emphasis works to the detriment of personal exploration and the development of inquiry.	How can the goals and aims of drama be better understood by educators and the public?
Teachers returning to the classroom after many years' absence and teachers of other subjects (often English) who suddenly have dramatic arts added to their timetables are often out of touch with current theory and practice.	What immediate steps can be taken to rectify this situation?
Because a scarcity of organizational units exists in the area of dramatic arts, there is no one to speak for drama when programs are threatened.	What organizational techniques can be devised at both the board and the school levels to represent the interests of dramatic arts and to help ensure that drama is given due consideration?
Theatre is a valuable adjunct to the exploration of issues and concepts with students. Theatrical experiences have much to offer, but a balance with goals of drama in education must also be struck. Good theatre grows out of good drama.	What criteria should be employed in evaluating drama programs with respect to this concern?

Music

Conclusions	Focus for Discussion
The implementation of non-performance activities outlined in ministry guidelines has not kept pace with that of performance activities.	Where does the responsibility lie for ensuring that music courses in elementary and secondary schools strike a more equitable balance between performance and non-performance activities?
Vocal-music programs are declining in some areas of the province, and there appears to be less emphasis on the development of the art of choral singing.	What are the reasons for the decline in vocal-music and exemplary choral programs? How and by whom can this deficiency be addressed?
In some parts of the province teachers of instrumental programs in Grades 7 and 8 do not have sufficient instrumental background to provide satisfactory instruction.	How can school boards provide quality instruction in instrumental music at the Grade 7 and Grade 8 levels?
A general lack of musical expertise and resources in both the French and English school systems prevents those systems from effectively achieving the goals of music education at the elementary level.	How can we develop the required expertise? Who should share the responsibility?
In some cases semestering has had a detrimental effect on the development of performance skills in music for secondary-school students.	To what extent does semestering adversely affect school music programs? What steps can be taken to ensure a continuum of growth opportunities in performance skills?

Visual Arts

Conclusions	Focus for Discussion
A comprehensive visual arts program is one that meets the needs of the entire school population.	How can the visual arts program meet the needs of students with a wide variety of capabilities, talents, and backgrounds?
Much curriculum development in visual arts is carried on in a fragmented fashion and lacks continuity throughout the system as well as in specific areas of growth.	What means can be employed to ensure continuity of program and growth for the individual in visual arts?
Minimum requirements and expectations for visual arts programs must be clearly defined and supported by the school system.	What should be the minimum requirements and expectations with regard to qualification of visual arts resource personnel and teachers, curriculum development, funding, learning materials, pupil-teacher ratio, and environmental conditions?
Many visual arts programs lack the enrichment gained through the inclusion of artist-in-the-school programs, museum and gallery visits, and the use of community resources and agencies.	How can the school system make maximum use of the broad resources available in the community?
There needs to be greater concern for the potential health hazards associated with certain materials used in visual arts programs.	Who should assume responsibility for improving safety conditions in visual arts classes?
Evaluation of visual arts programs must be based on clearly defined expectations in each of the following dimensions: organization, curriculum, personnel, time and scheduling, facilities, materials and equipment, and budget.	How can the school system ensure that each of these dimensions is considered in the scheme of evaluation for quality programs in visual arts?

Arts Across the Curriculum

Conclusions	Focus for Discussion
Much worthwhile learning in the arts can result when teachers use the arts in other subject areas for motivating learning, internalizing concepts sympathetic with the human spirit, educating the senses, and assisting with the development of language and social skills.	What kinds of assistance do classroom teachers require to increase their expertise in using the arts to add an aesthetic dimension to learning in all areas of the curriculum? Who should provide these forms of assistance?
Techniques and processes learned in specific arts disciplines may be applied and transferred to learning in other areas of the curriculum.	Where are opportunities for such transfer be developed?
Vibrant arts programs which permeates the total curriculum and involve co-operation among teachers and students at all levels can greatly enhance the quality of the school environment.	How can students' artistic talents be used to improve the social and aesthetic climate in the school?

